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Message Text

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20/11
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 IO-14 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20

RSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15

PRS-01 DRC-01 (ISO) W
---------- 040782
R 191600Z OCT 73
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8659
INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES
AMCONSUL LUANDA
AMCONSUL OPORTO
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PO
SUBJ: PRESS COVERAGE OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

SUMMARY: PRO-GOVERNMENT PRESS HAS VIGOROUSLY PURSUED "OFFENSIVE" ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN TACTICS, AND ACCENTUATED POSITIVE ASPECTS OF GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM, WHILE BLITTLING OR IGNORING CDE ELECTORAL PLATFORM AND ATTACKING THE OPPOSITION'S CAMPAIGN TACTICS AND CANDIDATES. OPPOSITION PRESS, WITH RESTRICTIONS LESSENED DURING CAMPAIGN, HAS HIGHLIGHTED TWIN THEMES OF GOVERNMENT HARRASSMENT CDE ACTIVITIES AND CANDIDATES, AND FAILURE OF CAETANO'S ALLEGEDLY REFORMIST-ORIENTED "SOCIAL STATE." END SUMMARY

1. BASIC LINE OF PRO-GOVERNMENT PRESS SET AT INAUGURAL SESSION SEPTEMBER 30 OF ANP'S ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN, WHEN ASSEMBLED DELEGATES WERE TOLD THAT ANP'S ELECTORAL TACTICS WOULD BE ESSENTIALLY OFFENSIVE, AFFIRMING AND CLARIFYING ANP'S IDEALS, VALUES, AND REASONING, AND STRESSING HIGHLIGHTS OF CAETANO'S PROGRAM TOWARD
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CONSTRUCTION NEW SOCIAL STATE, WHILE ATTACKING OPPOSITION

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AS DEFEATISTS AND TRAITORS.

2. TRADITIONALLY PRO-GOVERNMENT ANP-OWNED EPOCA HAS CARRIED THE BANNER ON THIS THEME, ATTACKING BOTH CHARACTER AND PROGRAM OF OPPOSITION CANDIDATES. ESCHEWING DETAILED DEBATE ON CONTENT OF OPPOSITION'S PROGRAM, EPOCA HAS INSTEAD HYSTERICALLY ATTACKED CDE PROGRAM AS NOTHING BUT "POISONOUS MYSTIFICATIONS," "INEPT FALSIFICATION," "MISERABLE," ETC. CDE MEMBERS PERSONALLY LABELED "ENEMIES OF THE COUNTRY," "TREASONOUS LIARS," ETC. (EPOCA, IT SHOULD BE NOTED, HAS THE SMALLEST CIRCULATION OF ANY LISBON DAILY, WITH ONLY A FEW THOUSAND COPIES SOLD.)

3. THE LEFT-LEANING LISBON DAILIES REPUBLIC AND DIARIO DE LISBOA HAVE BEEN TAKING ADVANTAGE OF REDUCED PRESS CENSORSHIP DURING THIS PRE-ELECTORAL PERIOD TO QUOTE AMPLY FROM CDE'S PROGRAM AND LIST OF COMPLAINTS. THEY ARE ALLOWED TO PRINT FULL CDE PLATFORM ON SUBJECTS SUCH AS LABOR MATTERS, INFLATION, AND RESTRICTIONS ON CDE CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES. HOWEVER, DIRECT PER ONAL CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT LEADERS, CALLS FOR REVOLUTION, AND CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE PULLOUT FROM OVERSEAS ARE STILL TABOO. ALSO, LITTLE OF WHAT THE CDE SAYS AT ITS RALLIES REGARDING THE OVERSEAS IS ALLOWED PAST THE CENSORS. HOWEVER, PRESS IS ALLOWED TO PRINT CDE REFERENCES TO PORTUGUESE "COLONIALISM" AND ITS "COLONIAL WAR," AN TO "EXISTENCE FASCIST REGIMES LIKE PORTUGAL'S," ETC.

4. OF LISBON NEWSPAPERS, MAJOR EFFORT TO GIVE BALANCED NEWS COVERAGE TO CAMPAIGN IS ONLY BEING MADE BY A CAPITAL, SECULO AND THE WEEKLY EXPRESSO. THE OTHER DAILIES DEVOTE MAJOR NEWS COVERAGE ONLY TO THE POLITICAL GROUPING THEY FAVOR ON IDEOLOGICAL GROUNDS. WHEN IT COMES TO EDITORIAL POLICY, HOWEVER, ALL LISBON DAILIES ARE BLATANTLY PARTISAN--THERE IS NO NEUTRAL, INDEPENDENT SOURCS OF POLITICAL COMMENT AVAILABLE TO THE ELECTORS. LIBERAL EXPRESSO, HOWEVER, HAS DOUBTS ABOUT BOTH THE CDE AND ANP, AND HAS NOT TAKEN SIDES
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EDITORIALLY.

5. COMMENT: AS EXPECTED, OPPOSTION HAS BENEFITTED SUBSTANTIALLY FROM RELAXATION PRESS CENSORSHIP IN THE PRE-ELECTORAL PERIOD. CDE HAS A RARE IF MOMENTARY FORUM FOR EXPOUNDING BASIC THEME THAT GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO BE A TOTALITARIAN REGIME MAINTAINED BY POLICE WITH AID OF A SINGLE PARTY, DEFENDED ONLY WITH THE HELP OF

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A STRONG REPRESSEVE APPARATUS AND TIGHT CENSORSHIP, AND
WITH THE SUPPORT OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CAPITALISM.

6. HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT ALSO BENEFITS FROM ALLOWING
BRIEF RESPITE FROM STRICT CENSORSHIP. AS IT WILL WIN
ELECTION, IT HAS LITTLE TO LOSE BY ALLOWING OPPOSITION
ONE MONTH IN FOUR YEARS TO EXPOUND ITS VIEWS. WHAT
THE OPPOSITION SAYS WILL NOT AFFECT ELECTORAL RESULTS,
AND TEMPORARY PRESS "FREEDOM"ALLOWS THE GOVERNMENT
TO ANSWER (ALTHOUGH NOT CONVINCINGLY) FOREIGN AND INTERNAL
CRITICISM THAT ELECTIONS ARE A FARCE, AND THAT THE OPPOSITION
CANNOT EVEN EXPRESS ITS VIEWS, MUCH LESS WIN A SEAT IN
THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LISBON03877
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731022/aaaaapru.tel
Line Count: 129
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21-Sep-2001 by rowellE0>; APPROVED <28-Nov-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

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Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS COVERAGE OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS SUMMARY: PRO-GOVERNMENT PRESS HAS VIGOROUSLY PURSUED
TAGS: PINT, PO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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